



17 June 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Attached Press Clippings

1. You will recall that at the opening of the 9 June session with the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee you ad-libbed that a recent New York Times story indicating a Soviet MIRV test apparently resulted from an analyst in the Defense Department having misread the telemetry, which in fact was ambiguous. When you made this point Senator Symington reacted visibly, looked at [REDACTED] and me and made a gesture which I can only interpret as meaning "for Christ's sake here they go again."

2. Incidentally during that session Symington had in front of him the attached William Beecher story in the New York Times.

25X1A

John M. Maury
Legislative Counsel

Attachments:

Pentagon Disputed on Statement Russia Is Testing Its Own MIRV

By William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Pentagon's assertion that the Soviet Union is testing a sophisticated multiple-warhead missile that can be guided to separate targets is being challenged by other members of the U.S. intelligence community.

Within that community, there is a body of opinion which holds that the Russians are not testing independently targetable missiles and that information on Soviet tests is ambiguous at best.

It was also learned yesterday that Secretary of State William P. Rogers told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week that so far as he knew the Soviets are

not testing separately targeted missiles.

At issue in the dispute is an evaluation of what the U.S. learned in observing recent Russian missile tests in the Pacific. Prior to those tests, there was general agreement that MIRVs—multiple, independently targeted reentry vehicles—were not being tested. It was agreed that the missiles contained multiple warheads but that they could not yet be guided to scattered targets.

In recent background briefings, unidentified Pentagon officials have asserted that new evidence shows the Russians' missiles are capable of striking separate targets with sufficient force to destroy hardened U.S. missile silos.

Using more cautious phraseology, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird told Congress three weeks ago that the Soviet Union "has the technical and economic capability" to install MIRVs in its large intercontinental ballistic missiles, the SS-9s.

If accepted, these assertions would help sustain the Pentagon's view that the U.S. must proceed quickly with its own MIRV testing program and with early deployment of an anti-ballistic missile system. Some Senators are exerting pressure to stop MIRV tests and a much larger group is attempting to delay deployment of an ABM.

See MIRV, A4, Col. 1

MIRV, From A1

But the intelligence community, which includes units in the Pentagon, Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department, is far from unanimous in evaluating the recent Russian tests in the Pacific.

One high-ranking intelligence officer said yesterday that some experts believe the tests were only continued experiments with multiple-warhead missiles that cannot be separately targeted. He said that the evidence is ambiguous and that no black-or-white conclusions could be drawn.

That evaluation has been communicated to several key Senators who believe the Pen-

tagon's version was intentionally circulated to counter embryonic movements in Congress to have the U.S. push for a bilateral cancellation of MIRV testing. The Pentagon is opposed to a cessation.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), an influential member of the Armed Services Committee, said on the Senate floor early this week that he doubted the truth of the "thrust" of one account of the Pentagon's assessments.

Symington called it "another illustration" of the Pentagon declassifying certain information to support its viewpoint. He had objected previously to the partial declassification of information on the

Administration's Safeguard anti-ballistic missile system.

Other Senators were perplexed to read of the Pentagon's evaluation after hearing Secretary of State Rogers' testimony last Friday in closed session.

According to reliable sources, Rogers was asked directly whether or not the Soviets have tested independently targeted warheads. He replied that they had not, so far as his information was concerned. One Senator later obtained confirmation of Rogers' opinion from both State and CIA intelligence evaluators.

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SOVIET GAIN SEEN IN MIRV PROGRAM

Pentagon Analysis of Tests Bolsters U.S. Advocates of Continued Testing

By WILLIAM BEECHER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 8 — A new analysis of Soviet missile tests in the Pacific is reinforcing arguments of those within the Administration who favor continuation of United States tests of multiple warheads.

The analysis, by intelligence experts in the Pentagon primarily, suggests that multiple warheads now being tested by the Russians may be capable of being guided to three scattered targets and powerful enough to destroy hardened missile silos.

Until now, United States specialists had believed the Russians were testing a three-part multiple warhead all three elements of which landed in a fairly tight, predictable pattern near one another, attacking only a single target.

Thus the new intelligence information, reliable sources say, suggests the Russians are further along than previously thought toward development of multiple, independently targetable re-entry vehicles, or MIRV's.

The United States, in the early stages of its multiple warhead program, also developed a three-part warhead whose elements landed in a tight pattern against a single target. Since then it has gone on to a more sophisticated system that directs the warheads against several targets, but in a manner different from that the Russians now are thought to be using.

The United States has been testing such weapons since last summer. In recent days criticism of these tests has been rising both within the Administration and in Congress. The critics suggest these tests might jeopardize achievement of a strategic arms freeze with the Russians.

Once the United States has the demonstrated ability to field such potent weapons, it is argued, the Russians would fear to end their development short of the same capability. And it would be hard to ascertain upon inspection, without actually taking a missile apart, whether it contained a MIRV.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers referred to the Russian missile tests and arms control implications in a news conference last Thursday.

"The Soviet Union is testing and we can't stop our testing on the hope that sometime an agreement would be reached," he declared.

Continued MIRV tests, he added, "won't prevent the talks from being successful and it wouldn't affect the talks, I don't believe."

Then, the next day, after a closed-door argument with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Rogers emerged to concede that successful MIRV tests over the next few months could raise "new problems of inspection" in an arms control agreement, but that the tests should not prevent such an agreement from being achieved.

American strategic planners say they are developing MIRV's to insure that if the Soviet Union installs a heavy missile defense system, United States missiles would still be able to penetrate to their urban targets in a retaliatory blow.

The assurance that United States missiles can respond to a surprise attack by destroying much of the Soviet Union is the foundation of American nuclear deterrence, they say.

To Overwhelm Defense

MIRV's are designed to overwhelm a large missile defense by showering so many warheads over enemy territory that they will exhaust all available defensive missiles and then destroy their targets.

But these weapons have another potential quality: if individual warheads are sufficiently potent and accurate, they could be used in a surprise attack to destroy a foe's intercontinental ballistic missiles and thus eliminate his ability to retaliate effectively.

It is this second quality that is the focus of the current debate.

At present the United States is developing a three-warhead MIRV for its Minuteman 3 and a 11-warhead MIRV for its Poseidon missile. Tests of these warheads started last August and are slated to continue into early next year.

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The MIRV vehicle is sometimes referred to as a space "bus." As the bus travels through space it makes slight maneuvers and pops out each re-entry vehicle, or warhead, on a predetermined course to a different target. The warheads are spaced from 20 to 50 miles apart, so that no one enemy defensive missile could knock down more than one warhead.

The present plans call for MIRV's to be installed on 500 Minuteman 3 missiles, out of a total Minuteman force of 1,000, and on 496 Poseidon missiles out of a total Poseidon-Polaris force of 656. The United States' strategic missile force would

then have more than 9,000 warheads.

But the United States is willing to alter or scrap these plans if a mutually advantageous arms freeze can be negotiated, officials declare.

The Soviet Union has been testing a three-part multiple warhead for its largest missile, the SS-9. Each warhead is believed to be about five megatons—the equivalent of five million tons of TNT—roughly 25 times as large as the warheads in the United States MIRV's.

Evidence from current Soviet tests in the Pacific suggests the Russians may be putting guidance equipment and a small propulsion system on each re-entry vehicle, rather than following the United States pattern of putting such equipment only on the larger dispenser, the "bus."

Some senior officials say the

nub of the current Administration apprehension centers on the fact that the SS-9, which they say the Soviet Union continues to build at a rate of about 50 a year, carries much larger multiple warheads than would be needed if the Russians were primarily concerned with penetrating a missile defense in the United States for the purpose of destroying American cities in a second strike. Such weapons, however, would be ideal for a first-strike attack against hardened Minuteman sites, these officials say.

By contrast, they say, United States MIRV's are too small to be relied on for a high-confidence first strike against hardened Soviet ICBM silos. "We could substantially cut down the number of warheads in a Poseidon and thus get bigger warheads with a greater count-

what we're striving for."

To date, according to Administration officials, the Russians have more than 1,200 intercontinental missiles, in place or going in. More than 225 of these are the giant SS-9 missiles, the officials say, and if a 50-a-year pace continues the Russians will have about 500 SS-9's in five years.

Such a force, with three warheads in each SS-9 and an accuracy of about one-quarter mile, could destroy 95 per cent of Minuteman missiles in a surprise attack, according to these officials. Some outside scientists contend that the destruction would not be this great.

Concern that the Russians are in fact trying to erode the United States' deterrent power is a large factor behind the Administration's effort to get a limited missile defense to provide some close-in protection for Minutemen, and to develop MIRV's to insure that missiles surviving a first strike could penetrate to their targets.

3 Schools of Thought

Within the Administration there are three main schools of thought on whether the Russians want to ban MIRV's.

One school holds that they are very much interested and that continuation of an active testing program by the United States will spur the Russians into trying to achieve an arms limitation agreement. Under this theory, continuation of plans to test and even start deployment of weapons capable of carrying MIRV's should speed the whole bargaining process.

Another school holds that the Russians are not anxious for a ban, since MIRV's would give

them a good capability of knocking out Minuteman missiles. Members of this school say the Russians know United States MIRV's are now too small to attack hardened silos very effectively. Thus, unless the United States built larger MIRV warheads, the lack of a ban would be to Russia's advantage, this school holds. According to this school, it makes no difference, so far as the Russians' attitude toward an arms agreement goes, whether or not the United States continues testing.

Members of the third school of thought, including some Congressmen and some officials of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said that if both countries genuinely want to keep the MIRV genie in the bottle, they should stop tests immediately. Otherwise, a new arms race would be set in motion to prevent either side from

cheating and deploying MIRV's secretly in existing missiles?

Most authorities agree that, short of actually dismantling a missile, which neither country is likely to approve, it would be impossible to detect cheating of this kind.

Is the Genie Out?

A significant number of officials, in the Pentagon, State Department and White House, are suggesting it might already be too late to keep the genie bottled up. But this would not be disastrous to the cause of arms control, they contend.

If the number of defensive missiles can be limited to a low level, and if the number of offensive missiles and bombers can be frozen at about present levels, they say, it might not be necessary to ban MIRV's.

Rather, a limit could be imposed restricting the dimensions or rocket thrust of offen-

sive missiles to those of existing missiles. That the number of missiles was kept frozen could be checked with spy satellites, they say. As for size, they continue, an occasional spot check on a missile site with a tape measure might provide sufficient inspection.

Physicists can accurately predict, the officials say, just how many MIRV warheads could be deployed on missiles of a specified size and thrust. The present force of intercontinental missiles in each country would not be enough—even if MIRV's were installed in them—to give either side a convincing first strike capability, these officials argue.

Interviews with several Administration planners, and Mr. Rogers's news conference statements of Thursday, suggest that this view is now being embraced increasingly within the Nixon Administration.